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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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**RESULTS OF MAY WATERFOWL SURVEY TOLD**

Findings for the month of May in the annual waterfowl breeding ground surveys being conducted in Canada, Alaska, and the United States this spring and summer were announced today by Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay. The surveys are a cooperative program of the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Canadian Wildlife Service, Provincial wildlife workers, State fish and game departments, Ducks Unlimited, and the Wildlife Management Institute.

This early information, along with later survey data, will be used by Canadian and United States officials as a basis for forecasting the fall flights of ducks and geese and for the drafting of appropriate regulations for the 1953-54 hunting season.

Field workers engaged in aerial and ground surveys in Canada found that the breeding season for ducks had been retarded by a week or ten days as compared with the average season. Unusual weather conditions were responsible.

A short period of mild weather in April had given way to snow and low temperatures before the month was over. Another mild spell during the first week in May was short-lived. May 10 and 11 brought a series of snow storms in the waterfowl-producing Prairie Provinces and many of the early nesting attempts, consequently, were broken up.

The next nesting attempts got under way around the third week in May and these gave promise of a good crop of new birds; contingent, of course, on satisfactory water conditions.

Water tables in some parts of Manitoba and Saskatchewan were below normal on May 1. While there was sufficient water in early May to take care of the birds present at that time there were indications that, over the course of this year's breeding season as a whole, there will be less water in these Provinces than there was last year. The bumper crop of birds produced last year, therefore, is not expected to be duplicated in this year's nesting. This holds particularly for Saskatchewan. Effects of the late snows, however, and any additional precipitation, will be very helpful.

Scattered reports from the Prairie Pothole States, where the bulk of United States waterfowl is produced, reveal that nesting conditions in North Dakota and western Minnesota were not as good as they were in May of last year.

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